

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A method of operating an inkjet printing mechanism, the  
5 method comprising:

passing media through a printzone, said printzone including a support apparatus supporting said media thereat;

10 during said passing, applying in a printzone print imaging by application of ink from an ink dispensing element and onto a first surface of said media; and

directing an airflow at said first surface, said airflow including a first directional component away from said printzone and a second directional component ~~onto~~into said first surface, said second directional component urging at least a portion of said media against said support apparatus in said printzone.

15 2. (original) A method according to claim 1 wherein said airflow is directed from an elongate vent.

20 3. (original) A method according to claim 2 wherein a length dimension of said elongate vent is generally transverse to a media feed direction of said media passing through said printzone.

4. (original) A method according to claim 2 wherein said length dimension of said elongate vent is substantially coincident with a width of said printzone.

25 5. (original) A method according to claim 1 wherein said airflow carries heat energy taken from a heat source.

6. (original) A method according to claim 5 wherein said heat source includes resistive elements carrying electrical current therethrough and having resistance thereto sufficient to

produce elevated temperature in said airflow as said heat energy carried by said airflow moving therewith.

7. (original) A method according to claim 6 wherein said resistive elements include  
5 electronic control circuit components serving also to support operation of an inkjet printer.

8. (original) A method according to claim 1 wherein said airflow is provided from an elongate vent having a length dimension less than a width of said printzone.

10 9. (original) A method according to claim 1 wherein said airflow carries heat energy taken from a heat source otherwise producing waste heat energy.

15 10. (original) A method according to claim 9 wherein said waste heat energy originates from electronic control circuit components.

11. (original) A method according to claim 10 wherein said waste heat energy originates from motor components.

(claims 12-13 withdrawn)

20 14. (original) A method according to claim 1 wherein said second directional component is of sufficient magnitude to maintain said media against said support surface in said printzone.

25 15. (original) A method according to claim 14 wherein said second directional component is directed away from said printzone.

16. (original) A method according to claim 1 wherein said first directional component is substantially uniform across said media in a direction generally transverse to a feed direction of said media passing through said printzone.

5        17. (original) A method according to claim 16 wherein said second directional component has greater magnitude at a laterally-outermost portion of said media relative to a laterally-central portion of said media.

10      18. (original) A method according to claim 1 wherein said first directional component varies across said media in a direction generally transverse to a direction of said media passing through said printzone.

15      19. (currently amended) An ink assist air knife comprising:  
                a heat source, said heat source including an inlet and an outlet, said heat source introducing heat energy into an airflow moving therethrough from said inlet to said outlet;  
                an air transport fluidly coupled to said heat source and moving said airflow therethrough; and  
                a conduit fluidly coupled to said air transport whereby said airflow as provided by said air transport passes through said conduit and exits a vent of said ink assist air knife as a heated airflow, with said vent being located relative to an inkjet printing mechanism having a printzone, said airflow as provided at said vent including directional components away from said printzone and sufficiently into media for stabilization thereof within said printzone, said media having print imaging thereon as applied by said inkjet printing mechanism within said printzone.

25      20. (original) An ink assist air knife according to claim 19 wherein said heat source comprises electrically conductive elements offering resistance to electrical current passing therethrough.

21. (original) An ink assist air knife according to claim 20 wherein said electrically conductive elements include control components serving also to support operation of said inkjet printing mechanism.

5           22. (currently amended) An inkjet printing mechanism comprising:  
              a printing system, including an ink dispensing element selectively ejecting ink droplets to produce imaging in a printzone thereof, said printing system further comprising a support apparatus partially bounding said printzone to support media therein relative to said ink dispensing element; and

10           an ink drying system including a heat source, an air transport, and an outlet vent, said air transport providing an airflow through said heat source, at said vent, and against said media with directional components at said outlet vent including a first component directed away from said printzone and a second component directed sufficiently into said media for stabilization thereof within said printzone.

15           23. (original) An inkjet printing mechanism according to claim 22 wherein said airflow promotes drying of said print imaging and maintains said media within a selected range of distance relative to said ink dispensing element by maintaining said media against said support apparatus.

20           (claims 24-28 withdrawn)

25           29. (original) An inkjet printing mechanism according to claim 22 wherein said heat source comprises electric components offering resistance to electrical current passing therethrough.

30. (original) An inkjet printing mechanism according to claim 29 wherein said electrically conductive components include electronic control components directing operation of said inkjet printing mechanism.

31. (currently amended) An ink assist air knife comprising:  
heat energy supplying means for generating heat energy;  
airflow producing means for producing an airflow, including means for collecting  
5 heat energy from said heat energy supplying means for incorporation into said airflow; and  
airflow directing means for applying said airflow to print imaging with directional  
components of substantial magnitude into said print imaging so as to be sufficient to stabilize  
media within a printzone whereat said print imaging is produced and bearing said print imaging  
and with directional components away from said printzone whereat said print imaging is  
10 produced.

32. (original) An ink assist air knife according to claim 31 wherein said heat energy  
supplying means comprises electric component means for offering resistance to electrical current  
passing therethrough.

15 33. (original) An ink assist air knife according to claim 32 wherein said resistive  
elements include electronic control component means for supporting operation of an inkjet  
printing mechanism means for producing said print imaging.

20 34. (original) An ink assist air knife according to claim 31 wherein said airflow  
directing means include a vent located in an inkjet printing mechanism having a printzone, said  
airflow being provided at said vent, said printzone defining a location at which said print  
imaging is formed.

25 35. (previously presented) An inkjet printing mechanism comprising:  
print imaging applying means for producing print imaging on media in a  
printzone; and

airflow directing means for directing said airflow into said print imaging including airflow directional components away from said printzone and sufficiently into said media to stabilize said media in said printzone.

5           36. (original) An inkjet printing mechanism according to claim 35 wherein said inkjet printer further comprises means for incorporating heat energy into said airflow.

37. (original) An inkjet printing mechanism according to claim 35 wherein said airflow directing means includes an air knife vent.

10           38. (original) An inkjet printing mechanism according to claim 37 wherein said air knife vent is stationary.

(claim 39 withdrawn)

15           40. (currently amended) An inkjet printing mechanism, comprising:  
               a print imaging device producing print imaging on media in a printzone; and  
               an airflow directing device applying an airflow to said media including first  
directional components away from said printzone and second directional components sufficiently  
20 toward said media to bear said media against a support apparatus of said printzone and thereby  
stabilize said media thereatwithin said printzone.

25           41. (original) An inkjet printing mechanism according to claim 40 wherein said airflow directing device is an air knife having an elongate slot located proximate said media and  
proximate said printzone whereby said second directional components maintain said media  
against said support surface when in said printzone.